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PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE SECOND EMPIRE.

III.—THE ALLIES OF THE PRINCE-PRESIDENT.

BY ALBERT D. VANDAM, AUTHOR OF "AN ENGLISHMAN IN PARIS," "MY PARIS NOTE-BOOK," ETC., ETC.

WHEN, at the end of the previous chapter, I said that Morny and Dupin *ainé* would not have joined the small group of the Prince-President's apparently faithful partisans but for their knowledge that the battle of the imperial cause was practically half-won, I wished to be understood literally. Both Morny and Dupin were venal to a degree, but it was the only thing they had in common with each other. Morny had a certain amount of physical courage, though not of the highest kind—the kind of courage which forms part of a French gentleman's education, but which, if properly analysed, would be found to contain a good deal of moral cowardice. Dupin was a coward, but with the courage to admit his cowardice. An anecdote of his early life will explain what I mean. His father had narrowly escaped death on the scaffold during the Reign of Terror. Though a staunch Republican, he hailed the advent of the Directory and the Consulate with intense relief, and sent his eldest son to Paris to study law under Tronchet, the same who with Malesherbes had solicited the dangerous honor of defending Louis XVI. at his trial. The stripling—for he was little more—remained absolutely impervious to the seductions and fascinations of the capital, and in six years obtained the highest distinctions his Faculty had to bestow. When complimented on his success, and the perseverance and pluck implied in the achievement, he answered, "I accept the compliment as to my perseverance. I cannot accept it as to my pluck, for it was not pluck but fear that made me accomplish these things. I trembled like an aspen leaf when I beheld the First Consul during the reviews in the Champ de Mars, and said to myself,

‘The brute will take us all as food for powder. I must escape such a death as that. That is why I studied so hard.’” Original, if pusillanimous, is it not? The fact is that Dupin was original from beginning to end, as we shall see directly—original even in his venality; Morny was not original at all. The half-brother of Louis Napoleon played his part in the *coup d’état*, the importance of which part has been much exaggerated, through the force of circumstances; Dupin performed his share in the preliminaries to the *coup d’état*, the importance of which share has not been sufficiently insisted on, from pure choice.

I will deal first with Morny, the accident of whose birth befriended his necessities, which necessities prompted the assumption of his rôle. Unlike Persigny, Morny had not even the faith that moves mountains, nor the generosity that hides such want of faith. But for his knowledge that he had gone too far either to serve the Republic or the Orleanist dynasty again, he would have retired from his position at the eleventh hour. As it was, he practically induced Louis Napoleon to do so by informing him that he had secured a retreat for both before it was too late.

“What if you should fail?” he is reported to have said, according to Persigny, who was present at the interview.

“We shall not fail,” replied the latter; “but if we do you need only concern yourself with the arrangements for our funerals, unless you like to take your share of this.” “This,” was a small packet wrapped in white paper which he took from his pocket.

“It’s poison,” said Persigny quietly, “and of the deadliest, and if you mean to use it you had better have your dose with you, for it is doubtful whether you will be with the Prince and myself to the last. I will not stir from his side happen what may.”

Morny shook his head with a supercilious smile.

“I am not fond of such violent measures,” he answered.

The supremest comfort he could think of for his half-brother when he left him shortly before midnight on the 1st December, 1851, was this: “Whatever happens within the next few hours, you are sure to have a sentry at your door when you awake to-morrow morning.”

The episode of the packet of poison remained an absolute secret between the Prince, Persigny and Morny until several years after the establishment of the Empire, at what time Per-

signy told one of my grand-uncles of it under the following circumstances. Persigny had at Chamarande a dog to which he was greatly attached. Though not very old the animal fell ill, and in spite of the veterinary surgeon's careful treatment seemed to suffer much. It would take neither food nor physic from any one's hand but Persigny's. At last his death was decided on.

"I poisoned it myself," said Persigny, when telling the tale. "I poisoned it myself, with one of the three doses of poison I had had in my possession since the middle of 1851. They were originally intended for the Emperor, myself, and a person I need not name, in the event of our failure.* On the 30th November, 1851, I offered that third dose to Morny, who tried to shake the Prince-President's courage by telling him that he had secured a safe retreat for him if matters should go wrong, in fact, almost persuaded him to avail himself of the retreat before matters did go wrong. Morny refused to have recourse to such desperate measures. I had forgotten all about my having the poison, though not the fact of my having bought it, until the other day. I have still two doses left; they may be useful some day. Who knows? What did the Prince-President say to Morny's refusal of the poison?" Persigny went on, in reply to my uncle's question to that effect, "The Prince-President said nothing, but merely smiled, and he has never alluded to the incident up till this day. Though you know the Emperor very well, you evidently do not know this. The Emperor's like or dislike of people is altogether independent of the merits or defects of those people; it is altogether independent of the ascertained or suspected corresponding sentiment with regard to himself on the part of those people. Put it in this way, if you like. Where his affections are concerned, the Emperor plays throughout with gold, though he may feel absolutely convinced that those with whom he plays are staking worthless counters."

Then Persigny apparently went off at a tangent, for he suddenly asked:

"Have you ever seen the Emperor and his cousin, Prince Jérôme, together? I do not mean in public, but in private."

My uncle admitted that he had not.

"You know," said Persigny, "that Napoleon III., like Na-

* In the note relating to this conversation my uncle insists, with how much justification I know not, that the unnamed person was Miss Howard, afterwards Comtesse de Beauregard.

oleon I., addresses his near relations in the second person singular when they are by themselves, and that his relations do the same?"

"Yes," assented my uncle, "I have heard the Emperor and Princesse Mathilde do it in my presence."

"Well," remarked Persigny, "although the Emperor addresses his cousin Jérôme in the second person singular, the latter always answers in the second person plural."

"Out of deference, perhaps," suggested my uncle, though he knew better.

Persigny laughed outright.

"All the respect Jérôme has for the Emperor will go into a very small compass indeed. No, it is not respect on Jérôme's part; it is resentment at a quarrel they had shortly before the advent of the Prince to the Presidency. When Jérôme made his appearance at the Elysée after that, he adopted the less familiar and affectionate form, and he has never departed from it since. The Emperor, who in reality has been a second father to him, continued to address him as before, and as if nothing had happened. If the truth were known, the Emperor still lives in hopes that his cousin will resume the old style, for, I repeat, the Emperor, where his affections are concerned, plays with gold, knowing full well, as he may, that those with whom he plays stake counters. He fosters no illusions with regard to Jérôme's goodwill to himself, the Empress, and the little boy just born; he has not forgotten Morny's attempt to discourage him on the eve of the *coup d'état*, but if ever blood was thicker than water it is Louis Napoleon's, and he goes on loving those whom he has loved, and will go on loving them whatever they may do."

It would be idle to pretend that Louis Napoleon cherished such affection for all his allies in the struggle he was waging, or even that he admired them all and attributed their aid to their personal regard for him. Napoleon III.'s character was curiously complex: he could admire without the least respect for the object of his admiration; he could respect without the least admiration for the object of his respect; he could love without the least admiration or respect for the object of his love or like. One instance will make my meaning clear. It is not at all pertinent to my present subject, but, in virtue of my being a mere

gossiper, I claim the right to take my illustrations wherever I find them. Napoleon III., in spite of his scepticism with regard to men, sincerely respected Drouyn de Lhuys, but did not like him ; the statesman, on the other hand, was too sterling and upright to respect his sovereign's devious political ways, but he liked him. "Drouyn de Lhuys and I," said the Emperor one day, "we each give away to one another what we are individually most in want of for ourselves."

It may be taken for granted that Louis Napoleon never contemplated enlisting André Marie Dupin among his allies, either before or after his advent to the Presidency. Though virtually a stranger to the soil of France, the Prince knew every man of note on it, and from their past judged in how far they could and would be useful to him in the immediate future. There could be no possible mistake in that respect with regard to Dupin. Wherever he could do so without absolute risk of liberty and life, young Dupin had shown himself a bitterly hostile opponent of Napoleon I. and his reign. *In a *Manual of Roman Law* he had lampooned the great captain as Tiberius while presenting the great captain's victim, the young Duc d'Enghien, under the traits of Germanicus ; he had bespattered the fallen giant after his abdication at Fontainebleau, and insulted him during his imprisonment at St. Helena. True, he had also defended Michel Ney against the acrimonious indictment of that other able lawyer Bellart, who moreover owed a great deal to Napoleon I. which Dupin did not ; but whatever merit might have accrued to him from this act of independence under the Restoration, he spoilt it by his prominent position ten years later among the mourners at Bellart's funeral. Not one, but half a dozen eminent men openly reproached him with his political apostasy. "You do not seem to understand that the defenders of Michel Ney were longing to hear the *De Profundis* recited for his executioners," he replied, and evidently considered the epigram sufficient to condone as well as to explain his insult to the memory of the martyred victim of one of the foulest crimes perpetrated under the pretext of dynastic necessity.

Dupin's belief in the omnipotence of epigram as a moral veneer for political as well as other immorality was to a great extent justified by his thorough knowledge of and his supreme contempt for the majority of his countrymen, and especially for

those actively engaged in politics. He knew that in France one well delivered epigram is sufficient to start a man on a prosperous career, sufficient to hurl the man at whom it is levelled from the pedestal to which he has climbed with infinite trouble and perseverance. And seeing that he had not his equal in the facility for coining epigrams, not even in Talleyrand, that his peer in that respect, Rivarol, had been in his grave since the beginning of the century, Dupin had never been very sparing of them. From that moment, however, he began to sow them broadcast, taking care not to hide his light under a bushel, for modesty was not Dupin's besetting sin. Rather than plead and not be reported, he refused to plead at all ; which, in fact, he did when asked to defend Béranger a third time. Of course, he did not say so in as many words, but no one was his dupe, because every one was aware that, as an exceptional measure, the Government intended to exclude reporters from the trial. Nevertheless, almost every one thought it perfectly natural that Dupin should not care to waste his truly marvellous epigrammatical and histrionic talents on empty benches and without a chance even of having his *mots* conveyed at second hand to the public which was so eager for them; so that when in 1832 he was elected to the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies the public took care that he should have no cause of complaint on that score. They flocked to the Palais-Bourbon as their successors flock to the *Académie* at the reception of a new member, and they were invariably better rewarded for their journey than the latter. They flocked to the Palais-Bourbon as the cultured Parisians of to-day flock to the Comédie-Française to roll on their mental palates the epigrams of Dumas *fils* and Edouard Pailleron, sublimely indifferent to the goodness or badness of the cause on which those epigrams are expended. Dupin spared neither friends nor foes. When seated in the presidential chair perched atop of that storied platform, and with that deep-toned silver bell in front of him, he had only subjects for vivisection whose mental sores he laid bare with one deft turn of his scalpel. The patient might be in the opposite political camp or in his own, the epigram when on the tip of Dupin's tongue had to find vent. In fact, it is difficult to determine to which party Dupin belonged, for he lashed all in turns. Like Thiers, he is a political acrostic. Thiers' whole spells "personal ambition," Dupin's "rapacity."

His average income at the bar during the Restoration was about 80,000 francs, an enormous sum in those days, never exceeded at that time by the most brilliant legal luminaries, Berryer included. But Berryer had the improvident habit of remitting part of his clients' fees now and then ; nay, in one instance, remitted the whole of such a fee lest a client's daughter, whose dowry had been swallowed up in her father's lawsuit, should go husbandless. Dupin exacted his to the utmost farthing and was not always satisfied then, as the Napoleonic generals whom he defended under the Restoration, and the three Englishmen who helped Lavallette to escape could have testified. Earning, as he did, 80,000 francs per annum, it was but natural that he should have refused elevation to the Bench under the Restoration at half that stipend, but no sooner had Louis Philippe ascended the throne than he accepted a procurator-generalship. It would, he knew, pave the way to the Presidency of the Chamber with a salary of 100,000 francs; and the functions would, moreover, leave him free to resume his practice at the bar, as did M. Jules Grévy forty years later on. For nearly eight years Dupin filled the presidential chair, and he would have probably filled it till the end of Louis Philippe's reign, but for a combination between Thiers and Molé, both of whom had got tired of his repeated onslaughts, and by their tactics prevented his reelection at the opening of the session of 1840. Molé in his fall dragged Dupin with him.

This was the man who after an interval of ten years was chosen once more to direct the debates in the Chamber of Deputies, and whom the would-be historians of the *coup d'état* have unanimously left in the background. It is because these writers, even M. de Maupas, whose work I translated myself, have not had the unenviable but nevertheless salutary advantage of attending for days and days during several years the proceedings at the Palais-Bourbon, and because, therefore, they do not know and fail to guess what a President of the Chamber may and often will do in the pseudo-exercise of his legitimate duties. I have had that advantage, and do not hesitate to say that a President of the French Chamber can mar or make a ministry even more effectually than the majority which supports such a ministry. Although I had never seen Dupin at work, I felt convinced the moment I read the innumerable anecdotes and heard the absolutely unpublished stories about him that as "an artisan" of the *coup d'état* he

ought to rank next to Persigny and even before Fleury, which is not saying little, as the reader will find directly. It matters little or nothing to my present purpose that his share of the work was performed unconsciously, or, if not unconsciously, against his own inclination, at any rate at the beginning of Louis Napoleon's presidency; for I feel certain that not for one instant did he then harbor the thought or desire of smoothing the latter's road to the imperial throne. That he did smooth it is incontestable, and that is why I have dwelt at such great length on him, although the writing of his biography would have been attractive to me under any circumstances. He, a professed Republican—for after Louis Philippe's fall he resumed that appellation once more—made the Republic, its parliamentary adherents, its ministers, and for that matter the whole of the legislature, ridiculous in the eyes of France, and ridicule kills in France, “especially when directed against a civilian,” as Louis Napoleon himself admitted. By making the Republic ridiculous, he bred the wish in the minds of Frenchmen to have done with the *régime*. That was, roughly speaking, his share in the preparations for the *coup d'état*.

How he did it must be told in as few words as possible, for I have already outrun the space originally intended for Dupin. One day the Protestant Minister, Athanasius Coquerel, was trying to prove that the Republican system was based on the Gospel. “Nonsense!” exclaimed Dupin. “I have yet to learn that Christ said, ‘My republic is not of this world.’” On another occasion, Victor Schulercher, who died only a couple of years ago, having said, in the course of one of his speeches, “We enjoy the happiness of living under a Republic,” he was violently interrupted by the members of the Right. Astonished, the speaker turned to the President for an explanation. It came at once. “No one is questioning the fact of the Republic; they are only contesting the fact of the happiness,” remarked Dupin. “Persigny is no doubt the author of the *coup d'état*,” said the Emperor to my uncle when the news of Dupin's death came (1865); “yet, but for Dupin, there would have been a difficulty in performing the piece; he discredited the rival authors and their companies, and finally shut up their theatre.”*

* In my various conversations with M. de Maupas and others, I have never been able to ascertain with any degree of satisfaction to myself whether Dupin's attitude in the early morning of the 2d December, 1851, was a carefully rehearsed one or forced upon him by the knowledge of his powerlessness to resist the troops that had invaded the Palais-Bourbon. All my interlocutors, but especially Maupas, always

Napoleon III. was right ; Persigny was virtually the sole author of the *coup d'état*. That his name has been cast into the shadow by that of the principal actor of his piece is due to the fact that the actor was perhaps greater as an actor than the author as an author. The same thing has happened on the stage with the authors of *Our American Cousin*, *Rip Van Winkle*, *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, *L'Auberge des Adrets* ; in fact, in all cases where the interpreter's genius surpassed that of the playwright. But, however great the author, if his piece be a spectacular one like the *coup d'état*, he must, in addition to his principal interpreter or interpreters, have various stage managers and notably able editors and journalists who, without revealing the actual plot of the play, will gently stimulate the interest of the public until the play be ready to stir the public into enthusiasm or disgust. Cavour found his stage-managers in La Marmora and Cialdini, his editors and journalists almost everywhere ; Bismarck had Von Roon and Von Moltke to rely upon in the one capacity, and a score of eminent men throughout the Fatherland to propagate his views by means of the printing press. Journalists and captains were virtually ready to Cavour's and Bismarck's hands. Cavour and Bismarck bore honored and historic names which inspired confidence ; their collaborators offered themselves. Persigny had no ancestry to boast of, and his name was known only in connection with two miscarried adventures and to a small minority. It is doubtful whether his name inspired any confidence at all. Yet, in spite of these drawbacks, he found two men of inestimable value to his undertaking, or, to speak by the card, he at once guessed their capabilities when chance or design threw them across his path. I am referring to Dr. Véron and Colonel (afterwards General) Fleury.

I doubt whether the former's name is known, at any rate in connection with the political events preceding the Second Empire, to one out of every thousand Americans and Englishmen. I doubt whether the latter's is more than a name to one out of

turned the subject. Nevertheless, from evidence gathered from other and entirely disinterested quarters, I am of opinion that Dupin knew what was going to happen. While Baze and Lefô were arrested and led away, Dupin was left unmolested in his apartments at the Palais-Bourbon—nay, free to roam about. When, a few hours later, about threescore of Deputies managed to effect an entrance to the house, owing to an oversight of Espinasse and Saint-Arnaud, and asked Dupin to preside over their sitting, he declined and wished them good morning. Maupas scarcely devotes half a dozen lines to his share in the proceedings ; the fact remains that after the establishment of the Empire he was on very friendly terms with the Emperor. What was his reward ? Not a public one, but a substantial private one, I feel convinced.

every hundred ; and yet both these men contributed powerfully to Louis Napoleon's elevation to the throne ; but unlike Dupin's, their support was given consciously and with a full knowledge of what might be the result. Émile Fleury was absolutely disinterested in the matter, but he had an innate sense of the fitness of things, and considered that a king should enact the king, an usurper have the daring, the lawlessness, and grandeur of an usurper. Louis Philippe, it must not be forgotten, was as much of an usurper as Louis Napoleon, but he lacked the daring, lawlessness, and grandeur of an usurper. His fall from the throne was not a fall, but a tumble. He himself was probably too old to head a struggle for his crown, but his four sons were all in the prime of life, and not one stretched forth a hand to save that crown, if not for their septuagenarian father, at any rate for their ten-year-old nephew. That this tame submission to the will of the mob was profoundly distasteful to the whole of the French army there can be not the slightest doubt, albeit that the contempt for that mob and the disapproval of the princes' tameness, manifested itself at the time and subsequently in very different ways. Here is a story which my uncles had from the lips of General Talandier, the same to whom I referred in the first chapter as having stemmed, when but a colonel, the tide of insurrection on the occasion of Louis Napoleon's attempt at Strasburg. "Fleury," said the general, when alluding to the former's share in the *coup d'état*, "well, Fleury felt what most of us did, that it was no use fighting for those who would not fight for themselves. That most of us were of that opinion I could prove to you by a dozen stories. One, however, will do. During the month of February, '48, I commanded the 4th Brigade, which was quartered at the *École Militaire*. When I learnt the news of Louis Philippe's departure, I sent for the seven colonels under my orders, for there were three regiments of the line, three of cavalry, and a battery of artillery. I proposed to gather up our little army and to take up a position at Passy and to bring back the king if possible. All but one colonel refused."

And we must bear in mind that this was before the Duc d'Aumale's want of action became known. The enthusiastic co-öperation of the army in the *coup d'état* wants no other explanation than this. All the tales of the fabulous sums of money given on the eve of it to Morny, Maupas, and Saint-Arnaud—to

the latter especially, as bribes for the army—are so many fabrications. To begin with, the army did not want bribing, and least of all the garrison in and around Paris. Apart from the magic influence of the name of Napoleon, to which I have already alluded, to which I shall have to allude again directly, the army had grievances of its own to avenge on the people. The defeats of their predecessors in the Revolution of 1830 and the defeats of their fellow-soldiers in the Revolution of '48—defeats attributable to no fault of theirs—were rankling in their minds. Their subsequent victories in June, '48, and June, '49, were not of a kind to efface the humiliating recollections of those defeats. If the truth were known, they were all but too eager to try conclusions with the turbulent scum of Paris, and especially with the National Guards. Secondly, if bribery with money had been necessary, Louis Napoleon could not have done it, for he had not the wherewithal. I have more than one impartial authority (Maupas' evidence might be suspected) for my positive statement that the sum of money in the possession of Louis Napoleon at 10.30 p. m. on the 1st December, '51, did not exceed 65,000 frs., 50,000 of which had arrived but two or three days before from England, with a polite but very firmly worded intimation that "this will be the last remittance under existing circumstances." The real significance of that sentence quoted I have explained elsewhere;* with regard to my statement that those 50,000 frs. were nearly the whole of Louis Napoleon's resources, I have no less an authority than that of the late Baron James de Rothschild, on whose bank the draft from London, and made payable to Persigny, was drawn. At least such is my reading of a note in my uncle's handwriting and relating to a conversation on the subject with Baron James. My uncles frequently called on him,† and though, of course a busy man, he was rarely so busy as to decline chatting for a little while on matters not connected with their call. It was during one of those chats that Baron James delivered himself of the following, but I have no clue to the origin of the topic. "All those cock-and-bull stories about the wholesale bribing of the Paris garrison on the day of the *coup d'état* would be vastly amusing, if they did not undermine the respect of the soldier for his officers—consequently, discipline. Some one in authority should

* *An Englishman in Paris*, vol. ii., chap. 3.

† *My Paris Note-Book* (American edition), p. 11.

give them a flat contradiction once for all. The Emperor cannot do it for many reasons ; besides, no one would believe him if he did. I could do it, but people would believe me even less than the Emperor, and yet I could give them proof positive for what I should state, for I know almost to a few thousand francs how much money Louis Napoleon had in his possession on the night of the 1st December. He received 50,000 frs. from England two days before, I saw the draft ten minutes after it had been presented, and I do not believe he had another 20,000 frs. to save his life. Where would he have got the money from ? Miss Howard had given all she had to give ; Princesse Mathilde had stripped herself of every bit of available property, portable or otherwise, long before that. From the Bank of France, which, it is said, advanced him ever so many millions, or, to put it correctly, was compelled by him to advance those millions in return for some privilege ? He had no privilege to give, and people might just as well say that we advanced him the money. Nay, the latter hypothesis would sound more plausible, for we, at any rate, could have done as we liked without consulting any one ; the Bank of France could not have done so, for the Republicans kept a strict watch upon every one likely to be useful to the Prince-President. He had not even the power to transfer a horse from the stables of St. Cloud to his own. I have an English groom in my service who was at St. Cloud during the three years of the Presidency. One day Louis Napoleon visited the stables in company with an Englishman ; and the stud-groom, also an Englishman, trotted out a splendid chestnut to show them. ‘Send that horse to me in Paris,’ said the President. ‘I can’t do that, sir,’ replied the man respectfully ; ‘the horse belongs to the Republic.’ I am giving you the story in the very words given to me. Besides, if the Prince had all those millions of the Bank of France in his cash-box—some say it was five, others ten—why should he have wanted that miserable 50,000 frs. from London ? for although the draft was made payable to Persigny, there is no doubt that the money was intended for Louis Napoleon.”

No, the army did not want bribing. After three years of constant contact with the heir of Napoleon I. it was ready to do anything and everything at that heir’s bidding, seeing that only a month after his advent to the Elysée the mere sight of him had aroused the troops’ enthusiastic cries of “*Vive l’Empereur !*”

Their coöperation was a foregone conclusion from that day forward, but it wanted intelligent organizing and intelligent leading, and some of the officers had to be shown that Louis Napoleon was not such a "vile civilian" as Cavaignac and his partisans had tried to make him out; not such a "melancholy parrot" as Changarnier delighted in calling him when he found the melancholy parrot develop a tendency for uttering sentences other than those he had tried to drum into him.

The task of proving that this vile civilian and melancholy parrot was "a gentleman from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and every inch a king," as Lord Normanby, an enemy, said of him, devolved upon Colonel Fleury as far as the army was concerned. But he did more than that. It is no exaggeration to say that from the beginning of '49 till the beginning of '52 he was the virtual Minister for War, no matter who was nominally the holder of the portfolio, or, to put it in the pertinent words of Persigny—than whom no man was more anxious to acknowledge the services rendered by Fleury—"he was the Minister for the Civil War we foresaw as the result of the Prince's action." It was Fleury, who during those three years selected the regiments to be successively quartered in Paris, and sent them back to the provinces thoroughly imbued with the idea that the imperial *régime* was best suited to the physical welfare of the army at home, to its prestige both at home and abroad; it was Fleury who pointed out the officers for promotion, and recruited Saint-Arnaud and Magnan in Algeria, a by no means easy task in spite of the feeling of discontentment generally prevalent at the last public act of Louis Philippe's fourth son. Truly, the sudden departure of the Duc d'Aumale, his quiet resignation of the governor-generalship of the colony without his striking one blow for the recovery of his father's throne, had bred universal dissatisfaction among those officers in Africa; but the recollection of the Duc's splendid courage and leadership remained; and though the officers had withdrawn their allegiance from him, they were, perhaps, not quite prepared to transfer it at a moment's notice to an "individual"—the term is not mine—of whom in spite of the glamour of his name, they knew comparatively nothing, who had, moreover, not gained in their estimation at the hands of the two immediate successors of the Duc, namely, Changarnier and Cavaignac. This feeling of hostility

to Louis Napoleon in the African contingent of the French Army only wore off by degrees; as late as 1852 there were still some slight traces of it left; for the Prince-President could not counteract it by the charm of his personal presence. Fleury, however, was not only a valiant soldier and a thorough man of the world, but a far from despicable organizer, and, what was better still, a skilful diplomatist. Even Thiers had to admit this, though reluctantly, after his journey to St. Petersburg in the end of 1870, at what time Fleury had vacated his post of ambassador but a few months. Alexander II. not only referred constantly to Fleury's diplomatic capacities, but almost plainly hinted that if a sense of a soldier's duty had not compelled Fleury's departure, the sequel to Sedan might have been different from what it was. To the outside world of 1848, though, Colonel Émile Fleury was nothing more than a brilliant, dashing officer with a splendid record for personal valor, but otherwise in no way distinguished from a host of similarly endowed African campaigners, except for a greater fund of amiability and an utter absence of buckram, brusqueness, and conceit. It is doubtful whether the newly elected President of the Republic chose Major Fleury—he was only a major then—as a member of his military household for any but his social qualities. Fleury was a *viveur*, so was Louis Napoleon. Fleury was fond of woman's society, Louis Napoleon was too fond of it. Fleury was a constant visitor to the greenroom of the Comédie Française and other theatres. Louis Napoleon, while an exile in London, was frequently seen at the wings, especially when there was a pretty actress in the cast. "It appears, *commandant*, that you go behind the scenes," said the President, shortly after his accession, when a discussion about the prosperity of the House of Molière arose. "You must have some one to represent you worthily, Monseigneur," was Fleury's ready answer.

But beneath the jovial and apparently careless *bon-vivant*, Persigny had detected the sterling, clever emissary necessary to his purpose. Fleury went to enlist Saint-Arnaud, if feasible; Persigny, in all probability, had indicated him. The men who helped to make the *coup d'état* were all, with the exception of one (Dupin), without fear; for Morny, though refusing to take the dose of poison offered to him by Persigny, had given proofs of his courage on the battle-field; none but one (Fleury) was

without reproach. "One cannot force a cathedral door with a toothpick; and in a fight, provided one knocks one's adversary down with it, the ledger of the National Debt (*le grand livre*) is as good as a Bible," said the Emperor one day when referring to those who had helped him. I have written the sentence in English, but it was delivered half in English, half in French. It was a habit of Louis Napoleon to use two and sometimes three languages in so many sentences. "I do not like my thoughts to sit fretting at home because they do not happen to have the exact clothes to go out in," he remarked on another occasion, in explanation of this habit. Persigny knew all about Saint-Arnaud without having been told. Both men had led a checkered career. Saint-Arnaud, though belonging to a very good family, had been a commercial traveller, an actor, a fencing-master, and heaven knows what else besides, before he entered the army a second time. Persigny had followed many occupations, and none for very long, after he exchanged the dragoon's uniform for the dress of the St. Simoniens, and the latter garb for that of everyday life. Saint-Arnaud and Persigny had no doubt met at some period of their lives, but it would not have done for a simple civilian to sound the general of brigade and Knight Commander of the Legion of Honor on so dangerous a subject as that of his co-operation in the *coup d'état*. So Persigny sent Fleury, whom, as a negotiator, he knew to be immeasurably superior to himself. "I can send Fleury into a quagmire of intrigue with a pair of dancing-pumps on; he will come back as clean as a new pin and with the object I want; Persigny with his jack-boots would get up to his waist in the mud and bring back the object utterly unfit for use. It is because the one would have made the journey with his eyes and ears wide open; the other with his eyes fixed on the sky watching for visions and only listening to the promptings of his own fealty and loyalty to me. Fleury always spoke and acted like the envoy of a Cæsar; Persigny, in spite of himself, conveyed the impression of his having been sent by a Catiline. Intrinsically there may not be much difference between the motives of these two, but history says there is, and history often spells 'prejudice.'" This was Louis Napoleon's estimate of the respective characters of his two principal collaborators.

None of the precautions so essential in the case of Saint-Arnaud was needed in that of Dr. Louis Véron. At that time, Dr.

Véron was the proprietor of the *Constitutionnel*, and what was better still, from the Prince-President's view, the sole arbiter of its policy. The influence of the *Constitutionnel* itself can best be measured by a couple of sentences from Lamartine with regard to it. "The Republic has produced nothing better in the way of a daily paper. The *Constitutionnel* is a clan of men of wit encamped one day on the Boulevard, the next in the Rue de Rivoli, watching the Revolution as it passes by, and looking at men and things with the smile of *dilettanti* and through an opera-glass." The chieftain's name had long before that become a household word with the Parisians, and Paris then as now dictated to the rest of France. There had been proprietors of nostrums before Dr. Louis Véron, but never such a one as he; there is not a single device in the way of advertising resorted to by the present vendors of patent medicines that was not suggested by him. The genius for booming his wares, himself, and those whom he wished to befriend, he brought to bear on the management of the *Révue de Paris* and on the direction of the Opéra, though with different results. The periodical was a comparative failure, simply because the public were not quite ripe for exceedingly good literature, but of a lighter kind, in monthly doses; secondly, because there sprang up in the mind, if not in the heart, of Dr. Véron himself a formidable rival for his affections, namely, the opera, which in the course of five years he raised to a pitch of prosperity such as it had never attained before nor has attained since. Dr. Véron ought to have been a happy man and clung to the Muse that virtually made him a prominent figure by the side of such celebrities as Meyerbeer and Scribe, Auber and Adam, Hugo, Balzac, and Dumas, with whom, of course, no one attempted or pretended to compare him intellectually, but with whom, nevertheless, he associated on a footing of social equality; basking, as far as the public was concerned, in the reflected glory of their fame. That, however, was not sufficient for him. Though he commanded social distinction long before similar distinction was accorded to great operatic impressarios in other lands, he flung operatic management to the winds to become a factor in politics. He was bitten by the mania which in those days gripped some of the most brilliant luminaries of the literary firmament, Lamartine, Hugo, Dumas, Sue, etc. Unfortunately he chose to make his political *début* under the

guidance of Thiers; in other words, he bought the *Constitutionnel* and made Thiers its master, and Thiers rewarded him as he had always rewarded, and rewarded to the end, all those who made themselves the stepping-stones to his ambition: with ingratitude and promises which were not only never realized, but never intended to be realized.

It must not be supposed for one moment that Dr. Véron sat fretting over his political disappointments. He simply consoled himself for them by making money, for making money was a supreme enjoyment to him. But he was no miser. I knew Dr. Véron personally during the last ten years of his life, and, though too young to judge critically, I remember many acts of his kindness to the poor. Truly, as I remarked elsewhere, he did *not* do good by stealth and blushed to find it fame, but he did good for all that. My uncles were frequent visitors at his house, for though he had relinquished the active profession of a surgeon almost at the outset of his career, he was fond of the society of his former colleagues and proud of his medical degree. I never saw Lord Brougham in the flesh, but whenever I come across a portrait of the eminent English statesmen, my thoughts always wander back to Dr. Véron. I dare say the likeness exists to a great extent in my imagination. I have never tested it by putting their portraits side by side. I doubt, however, whether the two men had much in common mentally and morally, except their overweening vanity. Lord Brougham, I have been told, often made himself ridiculous in private life; I feel certain that Dr. Véron never did either in private or in public. Long before he flung Thiers overboard he must have known that the latter was furthering his own political ambition, and solely his own, by means of the *Constitutionnel*, but until he felt himself capable of navigating the ship himself, and sighted the America of his own ambition, he submitted to Thiers's whimsical dictatorship.

That moment of independent action struck shortly after the advent of Louis Napoleon to the Presidency, to which advent the *Constitutionnel* had contributed at the instigation of Thiers, who had made up his mind to be Louis Napoleon's successor at the expiration of the latter's four years of office, the period provided for by the new Constitution. In order to prove this, I append one of the Emperor's remarks on the subject to my uncle. "Shortly after my election to the Presidency, Thiers asked me

one morning what official costume I was going to adopt, and when he heard that I was wavering between the uniform of a general of division and that of a general of the National Guards, he said, after a few moments: 'Take my advice—adopt neither the one nor the other. I feel convinced that the nation will be delighted to see its *civic* chief magistrate adopt civilian dress. Besides, if you were to adopt a military costume, your successor might be awkwardly situated if he could not do the same.' It was telling me in so many words," concluded the Emperor, "'I'll be succeeding you in four years, and I cannot very well put myself in a General's uniform.'" All these designs of Thiers were knocked on the head one day by an article in the *Constitutionnel*, entitled "Two Dictatorships." It was written by the father of M. Paul de Cassagnac, and simply announced that the *Constitutionnel* had gone over with arms and baggage to Thiers's enemy.

By that time the paper had already an enormous circulation—of course for the France of that day. Véron increased it still further by grouping around him all the literary men of note. He did more. He instituted a daily dinner at his house and a weekly gala one, both of which became the active centres of the propaganda of the Napoleonic cause. In the course of these chapters I shall be enabled to show the influence of the drama, music, and pictorial art on the history of France; I need not, therefore, insist upon it here. In fact, except M. de Maupas, not one of Louis Napoleon's *collaborateurs* has ever denied Véron's share in the *coup d'état*; and much as I owe to Napoleon III.'s Minister of Police, I feel bound to say that his evidence is tainted with jealousy. M. de Maupas never reconciled himself to the fact that there were 10,000 men in France who could have given the Prince-President the same intelligent co-operation he gave, and that chance befriended him in being selected for the task. There were not a half-dozen Vérons. General Magnan, assuredly more clever as a soldier than was M. de Maupas as a prefect of police, never advanced such pretensions of being unique in his way. Colonel de Bévillé, who performed his share in the affair with equal tact, determination, and skill to that of General Magnan, was as modest as he. The Empire, on the threshold of which we now stand, will show that, save Fleury, not a single one of Louis Napoleon's henchmen was capable of improving what he had helped to create, and least of all among

them M. de Maupas. But, like Louis Napoleon, I also must change my dress while preparing to enter the Tuileries. Henceforth, at any rate for a considerable time to come, I accept the part of Court chronicler; not a slavishly blind one, the reader may feel assured. Like Latour, the famous eighteenth-century pastellist, I will endeavor to be impartial alike to master and servants. If, at the end, the master still stand out as a great, though very faulty, man, it will be because the servants were faulty without having an atom of his greatness.

ALBERT D. VANDAM.

(To be Continued.)